



**AN ANALYSIS OF GRATITUDE EXPRESSIONS OF  
THE MAIN CHARACTER IN**

***I AM SAM MOVIE***

**A FINAL PROJECT**

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement

For S-1 Degree in Linguistics

In English Department, Faculty of Humanities

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## **PRONOUNCEMENT**

I state truthfully that this project is compiled by me without taking the results from other research in any university, in S-1, S-2, and S-3 degree and in diploma. In addition, I ascertain that I do not take the material from other publications or someone's work except for the references mentioned in bibliography.

Semarang, November 2018

Mella Anggaruni Putri

## MOTTO AND DEDICATION

*"Terus hancurkan hatimu, sampai hatimu terbuka, saat itulah cahaya pencerahan akan masuk"*

(Jalaluddin Rumi)

*"Do not let their words sadden you"*

(Qur'an, 10:65)

*"You don't have to work harder, you just have to work smarter"*

(Ratatouille)

*I sincerely dedicate this project to my family,  
and everyone who helped me in finishing this thesis*

**AN ANALYSIS OF GRATITUDE EXPRESSIONS IN *I AM SAM* MOVIE**

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I realize that this project is still far from perfect, therefore, I am so glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this project better.

Finally, I expect that this project will be useful for the readers who want to do the same research on gratitude of expression.

Semarang, November 2018

Mella Anggaruni Putri

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## ABSTRAK

Ada bermacam-macam bentuk ungkapan perasaan yang terkandung di dalam alur cerita suatu film. Salah satunya ialah bentuk ungkapan terima kasih. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan jenis-jenis ungkapan terima kasih yang digunakan oleh karakter utama dalam film *I am Sam* (2001). Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif-kualitatif yang menggunakan metode observasi dan *purposive-sampling technique* sebagai metode penelitian. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa ada tujuh kategori ungkapan terima kasih yang digunakan, yaitu *thanking* (9 data; 13%), *appreciation* (0 data; 0%), *repayment* (1 data; 2%), *recognition of imposition* (4 data; 6%), *apology* (8 data; 12%), *positive feeling* (23 data; 35%), *other* (6 data; 12%), *attention getter* (15 data; 23%). Berdasarkan hasil penelitian, kategori *positive feeling* adalah kategori yang paling sering digunakan. Sedangkan kategori *appreciation* adalah kategori yang tidak pernah digunakan.

Kata Kunci: film, bentuk perasaan, ungkapan terima kasih

## **I. Introduction**

Movie becomes one of the most influential media since it is a combination of audio and visual which makes the audience interested to watch. Not only the audio and the visual that help us to be imaginative and creative, but also almost in every movie there is always exist a hidden moral lesson which can change our perspective towards life. When talking about movies, some of them are fact-based, an adaptation from book, or just a fictional story. Although it has different genre, the similarity between all of the movies is that they contain many kinds of feeling expressions. For instance, actor expressing a gratitude.

According to Hornby (1995: 45), gratitude is the feeling of being grateful or the desire to express thankful feeling. Eisenstein and Bodman (1993) asserted that when this function is expressed appropriately, it can create feelings of warmth and solidarity among interactions, maintaining and enhancing social cohesion and social bonding in the society. Any failure to express gratitude (or to express it adequately) could have negative social consequences for interlocutors' relationships, leading to irritation, resentment and annoyance (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986). However, the magic power of a simple expression of gratitude has almost limitless potentials. Expressing appreciation to those who do things for you is also a way to make people

happy. Expressions of gratitude can be a happy experience for both the giver and receiver.

One of the movies that contain gratitude expressions is *I am Sam*. *I am Sam* is a 2001 movie, directed by Jessie Nelson. It tells story about Sam Dawson (Sean Penn), a man with a mental age of 7 who is well adjusted and has a great support system consisting of four similarly developmentally disabled men. He is living in Los Angeles and is single-handedly raising his daughter Lucy (Dakota Fanning), whom he fathered from a homeless woman who wanted nothing to do with Lucy and left Sam on the day of Lucy' birth. Although Sam provides a loving and caring environment for the 7-year-old Lucy, she soon surpasses her father's mental capacity. Questions arise about Sam's ability to care for Lucy and a custody case is brought to court.

The topic of gratitude expressions has been discussed by previous researchers. These research projects are written by Yasami and Rastegar (2014), Yusefi, Gowhary, Azizifar and Esmaeili (2015), Özdemira, Rezvania (2010), Yoosefvand and Rasekh (2014), and the last is by Shinta (2014).

The first thesis was written by Yasami and Rastegar. The study aimed at investigating the types of strategies used in thanking speech act among Iranian EFL Learners of different proficiency levels. The second thesis was written by Yusefi, Gowhary, Azizifar, and Esmaeli. This study attempted to study the most frequently used thanking strategies in Ilami Kurdish language.

The third thesis was written by Özdemira and Rezvania. Their study attempted to examine Turkish and Iranian graduate candidates expression of gratitude in an EFL context, specifically in term of the related strategy use and length of speech. The fourth thesis was written by Yoosefvand and Rasekh, they focused on investigate the strategies Persian native speakers employ for expressing gratitude in different situations. The last thesis was written by Shinta. This study focused on the expression of thanking strategies used by English Department student in the light of English native speaker norms of thanking strategies.

In addition, this research is different from the previous research. This research has different object, which is the main character in *I am Sam* movie. To determine what strategies used in expressing gratitude, I used the model pioneered by Cheng (2005).

## **II. Theoretical Framework**

### **1. Speech Act**

According to Yule (1996:47), speech act is an action performed which is produced by the speaker through his/ her utterances. The action is performed by producing an utterance consisting of three related acts. A locutionary act is the basic act of utterance of producing a meaningful linguistic expression. The speaker say something without any intention to the listener. The illocutionary act is performed via the communicative force of an utterance, such as apologizing, offering, questioning, etc. Perlocutionary act, which is an act that the statement is intended to affect the hearer.

Speech acts is classified into five kinds, namely representative or assertive, commissive, declaration, directive, expressive (Yule, 1996). Furthermore, he explained that representative or assertive is a kind of speech act that is aimed to state what the speaker believes to be the case or not. (Yule, 1996:53). Commissive is an illocutionary act which commits the speaker to do the action in the future (Yule, 1996:53). Declaration is a kind of speech act that change the world via an utterance (Yule, 1996:53). Directive is an illocutionary act where the speaker wants the hearer to do or not to do something. (Yule, 1996:53). Expressive is a type of speech act that attempt what the speaker feels. They express psychological states and can be statements of pleasure, pain, likes, dislikes, joy or sorrow (Yule, 1996:53).

## 2. Gratitude of Expression

Eisenstein and Bodman (1986) have defined gratitude as a kind of illocutionary act which a speaker perform based on the act done by the hearer in the past. This performed act has some benefits for the speaker and the speaker believes in this matter. Therefore, the speaker has the feeling of gratefulness or appreciation and expresses his or her feeling through an expression of thanking or gratitude. Kumar (2001) highlights the significance of expressions of gratitude in the following words:

Expressions of gratitude in the normal day-to-day interactions between the members of a society seem obviously to fall in the category of the “social” use of language. Expressions of gratitude and politeness are a major instrument the use of which keeps the bonds between the members of a society well-cemented and strong (p. 114).

Cheng (2005) taxonomy was based on 8 strategies for the expression of gratitude. The taxonomy of the expression of gratitude developed by Cheng (2005) is as follows:

### A. Thanking

One of the most commonly used speech acts is thanking (Pishghadam & Zarei, 2011). Thanking is one of the major instruments which strengthen the bonds between the members of a society (Farnia & Raja Suleimani, 2009). This strategy is quite recognizable due to the presence of the word ‘thank’ in the gratitude expression (Aijmer, 1996: 38). Cheng (2005) divided the *Thanking* strategy into three sub-strategies:

- a. Thanking only by using the word “thank you” (e.g. *Thanks a lot! Thank you very much!*)
- b. Thanking by stating the favor (e.g. *Thank you for your help* and *Thank you for your notice exemplify this sub- strategy*)
- c. Thanking and mentioning the imposition caused by the favor (e.g. *Thank you for helping me cleaning the room*)

#### B. Appreciation

Appreciation is a feeling or expression of admiration, approval, or gratitude (Webster, 2018). Expressing appreciation is an important gesture of gratitude, especially for those who have impacted your life or helped you in a need. Cheng (2005) stated two ways of appreciation:

- a. Using the word “appreciate” (e.g. *I appreciate it!*)
- b. Using the word “appreciate” and meaning the imposition caused by the favor (e.g. *I appreciate the time you spent for me*)

#### C. Repayment

Repay is a verb meaning to pay back (Webster, 2018). In another word, repay means give something in return. So, if someone does or gives something back in return for something received, they repay it. Cheng (2005) stated three ways to expressing repayment:

- a. Offering services, food... (e.g. *Next time is my turn*)

- b. Feeling indebted (e.g. *I owe you one*)
- c. Promising future self – improvement (e.g. *It won't happen again*)

#### D. Recognition of Imposition

By using this strategy, the thanker recognizes the imposition or the favor done to her to relieve the burden. According to Cheng (2005), recognition of imposition can be expressed in three ways:

- a. By acknowledging the imposition (exemplified by statements such as *I know you are not allowed to give me extra time*)
- b. Stating/ diminishing the need for the favor (e.g. *You shouldn't do that*)
- c. Stating the need for the favor (e.g. *I try not to ask for extra time, but this time I need it*)

#### E. Apology

Apologizing expressions can be used to express thanking. Long (2010) points out that the reasoning behind using apology to express thanking has to do with “the speaker’s recognition of a burden suffered by the hearer (i.e., the person who performed the act that serves as the object of gratitude)”.

Searle (1976) classifies the act of apology in his expressive category, stating “that the truth of the proposition is presupposed”. Cheng (2005) grouping appreciate in four ways:

- a. Using the apologizer words (e.g. *I am sorry*)
- b. Using apology by stating the favor (e.g. *I am sorry for the problem I made*)



c. Expressing embarrassment (e.g. *I feel embarrassment*)

d. Criticizing oneself (e.g. *I am such a fool...*)

#### F. Positive Feeling

Positive feelings are one of the important elements to have in your life to enjoy well-being and happiness. Expressing positive feeling or emotions to the other is believed can have an impact for that person too. The expression of positive feeling developed by Cheng (2005) is as follows:

a. Expressing positive reaction to a person (e.g. *You are a life saver!*)

b. Expressing positive feeling to action (e.g. *This book was really helpful*)

#### G. Other

Expressions that do not belong to the above strategies are categorized as other strategies. There are four sub-categories under the other strategies:

a. Here statement (e.g. *Here you are*)

b. Small talk (e.g. *Your face is very familiar to me but I cant remember where I saw you*)

c. Leave – taking (e.g. *Have a nice day!*)

d. Joking (e.g. *Don't forget to pay again next time!*)

## H. Attention Getter

In the thanking situations. Attention getter and address term are likely to occur in the same utterance. The alertes include:

- a. Attention Getter (e.g. *Hey, hi, well*)
- b. Title (e.g. *Dr, Professor!, Sir!*)
- c. Name (e.g. *John, Mary*)

### **III. Research Method**

This research belongs to descriptive-qualitative research because it is aimed to explained the used of gratitude expressions. The data were taken from the website of Drew's Script-O-Rama (*I am Sam* (2001) Movie Script, n.d). The data were the utterances which contain gratitude of expressions, uttered by the main character in the movie.

In collecting the data, I used non-participant observational method (Sudaryanto, 1993: 14), in which I did not involve in the conversation. Then, I apply the note taking technique to write the transcription. The population of this study is the whole utterance by Sam, while the sample is utterances containing gratitude of expressions which were taken by purposive sampling technique by choosing utterances which containing gratitude of expressions.

In analyzing the data, I uses qualitative method. I analyzed the gratitude of expressions in *I am Sam* movie using the classification of gratitude expressions by Cheng (2005).

## IV. Finding and Discussion

### 1. Finding

Table 1: Frequency and percentage of overall strategy used in *I am Sam* Movie

This is the total number in percentage of utterances that containing gratitude of expression uttered by the main character, Sam Dawson. The writer ranks it according to the biggest percentage to the smallest number of percentage.

GRATITUDE STRATEGY	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
<b>Positive Feeling</b>	23	35%
<b>Attention Getter</b>	15	23%
<b>Thanking</b>	9	13%
<b>Apology</b>	8	12%
<b>Other</b>	6	12%
<b>Recognition of Imposition</b>	4	6%
<b>Repayment</b>	1	2%
<b>Appreciation</b>	0	0%

Table 1 show that *positive feeling* strategy (35%) is the most frequent strategy used by Sam in *I am Sam* movie. The second strategy used is *attention getter* strategy (23%). The third strategy in order of frequency was *thanking* strategy (13%). *Apology* was the fourth most frequent strategy in *I am Sam* movie (12%). The other strategies *other*, *recognition of imposition*, *repayment*, and *appreciation* accounted for 12%, 6%, 2%, 0%. It can be inferred from the result of the table that Sam in the *I am Sam* movie used

positive feeling, attention getter, thanking, and apology as the common strategies much more than the other characters.

## 2. Discussion

### 1. Thanking

The first strategy in Cheng (2005) coding scheme is “thanking”. The first category will be explained is thanking only by using the word “thank you”. I found nine utterances using this category. This is the example of using the word “thank you”:

Patricia: Can we get you something to drink?

Sam : Is it for free?

Rita : My treat.

Sam : Ok. ***Thank you.***

(I am Sam, minute 36:27 – 36:29)

This utterance took place in Rita’s office, when Sam is trying to ask Rita if she could be his lawyer. The utterances said by Sam can be classified as thanking strategy only using the word “thank you” because he did not mention the reason he thanked to Rita.

The second category of thanking is thanking by stating the favor. I only found 1 utterance used by Sam in *I am Sam* movie. Here is the example,

Sam : ***Thank you for coming here today,*** Annie.

Annie : You’re welcome, Sam.

(I am Sam, minute 73:49 – 73:52)

The conversation above took place at the Court, when Annie gave the testify as the neighbor about Sam. Sam was feeling happy because Annie has come to the court to be his side. According to Cheng (2005), those bold words uttered by Sam is thanking by adding the favor. The verb favor itself means that to do kindness for (Webster, 2018). In another word, this

strategy is used to thanking someone by mentioning the kindness s/he has done after the word “thank you”.

## 2. Appreciation

I did not find any of this strategy that is used by Sam in the movie. Sam’s life is casual, so it is not common for him to say “*I appreciate you*” in explicit way. Because it is too formal.

## 3. Repayment

The third strategy in Cheng (2005) coding scheme is repayment. Responses such as “*next time is my turn, I owe you one*”. I found only one utterance in this category. The data of repayment, will be explained below:

Sam : ***My treat. My pro-bono. That means she doesn’t have to pay. I pay.***

Rita : No, no, no.

(I am Sam, minute 60:15 – 60:23)

This conversation took place in a restaurant, Sam insist to treat Rita after they have a dinner together. Repay often happen when we want to reward someone who has helped you or been kind to you (Macmillan, 2018). In this context, what Sam did to Rita is a form of repay. Because Sam wanted to reward Rita’s kindness to him.

#### 4. Recognition of Imposition

The fifth strategy in Cheng (2005) coding scheme is recognition of imposition. I found four utterances using this strategy. Here is the example of diminishing the need for the favor:

Sam : Words, words, words. **I need more than that! I need to make coffee. I need to pay my lawyer.**

(I am Sam, minute 100:48 – 100:55)

Sam compelled George to raise his position from cash register into coffee maker. Because Sam really need more money to hire a lawyer. The utterance that uttered by Sam is stating the need for favor. Because Sam mentioned to George the reason why he need the promotion into coffee maker.

#### 5. Apology

I found eight utterances of apology strategies used by Sam in the movie. 7 of them are apologies in “sorry” form of word. And the last number is apology in criticizing oneself. Here is one of the example of apology strategy by uttered “sorry” word:

Annie : Sam, babies need food every two hours.

Sam : ***Sorry. I’m sorry***, Lucy in the sky.

(I am Sam, minute 7:52 – 7:56)

This conversation happened at Annie’s apartment when Lucy is crying in the middle of the night. Annie explained the reason why Lucy is crying because she has to be feed every two hours. Sam did not know about that, then he felt regret to let Lucy starving. He expressed his regret by saying sorry to Lucy.



Here is the data of apology strategy by criticizing oneself:

Sam : *I make everything hard on everybody*

Rita : I can go, at least another nine rounds

(I am Sam, minute 99:51 – 100:01)

In this conversation, Rita is mad to Sam because she cannot find Sam anywhere. And then Sam is trying to say sorry to Rita implicitly, by criticizing himself in front of Rita because he felt like he only made everything hard on everyone around him.

## 6. Positive Feeling

Positive feeling is the most used strategy by Sam in the movie. I found twenty three utterances of positive feeling used by Sam. All of them are from expressing positive reaction to a person subcategories. There are three examples of Sam utterances in expressing positive reaction to a person, as follows:

Sam : Decaf double tall nonfat cap for Bruce

Bruce : You got it, buddy.

Sam : *That's wonderful choice*, Bruce

(I am Sam, minute 01:57 – 02:01)

This conversation took place at Starbucks, Sam's workplace. Sam positive reaction can be seen from the utterance that he said, "*That's wonderful choice*" could be a positive reaction we give to someone about something. In this context, Sam is praising Bruce about the coffee flavour he chose.

Here is another example of positive feeling uttered by Sam:

Sam : Lucy, *you look beautiful this morning*

(I am Sam, minute 05:59 – 06:02)

Sam is praising her daughter after changing her diaper in the night.

Another example of positive expression used by Sam:

Lucy : I don't want to read it if you can't  
Sam : *No, it makes me happy hearing you read*

(I am Sam, minute 07:20 – 07:34)

Sam likes to read a story book for Lucy everynight before they are going to sleep. As Lucy growing bigger, the choosing of the word in her book is getting difficult for Sam. At the same time, Lucy is refused to read the book if Sam cannot read it too. Instead of getting angry to Lucy, Sam said positive feeling to Lucy by saying that he is happy to hear Lucy read. So then it makes Lucy likes to read again.

## 7. Other

Expressions that do not belong to the above strategies are categorized as other strategies (Cheng, 2005). I found six utterances in this strategy. The first example is other strategy in small talk sub-categories, as follows:

Ifty : Hi, Sam.  
Sam : *What are you doing?* I am just getting Lucy asleep  
Brad : Oh, sorry. We're here for video night

(I am Sam, minute 09:23 – 09:26)

Small talk can be defined as informal, friendly conversation about unimportant subjects (Webster, 2018). In this conversation, Sam was surprised by his friends in his apartment. His utterance categorized as small talk strategy because Sam did not involve any serious topics to his friend. Sam is just asking a question to his friend, and received short response from his friend, such as "*We're here for video night*".

Here is another example from other strategy, categorized as joking:

Grace: The funny face special

Sam: ***I think it's funny when you say "Funny Face special"***

(I am Sam, minute 15:09 – 15:16)

This conversation took place at the IHOP restaurant. Sam said “*funny face special*” to Lucy because she ordered a menu named The Funny Face special. Lucy and Grace, the waitress laughed at it. Sam did a joking in his utterance, because joking is something said or done to provoke laughter (Webster, 2018).

#### 8. Attention Getter

The last strategy is attention getter. According to Cheng (2005), in thanking situations, attention getter and address term are likely to occur in the same utterance. I found fifteen utterances using this strategy. Most of them are mentioned name after they used “*thank you*” word. Here is the example of this sub-categories:

George : As a matter of fact, Sam and I were discussing a promotion we were going to put into effect next week.

Sam : Hooray for me! ***Thank you, George.***

(I am Sam, minute 71:40 – 71:49)

The utterance uttered by Sam is categorized as attention getter, because it is consist of thanking and also one of the attention getter sub-categories, name according to Cheng’s taxonomy.

## V. Conclusion

After analyzing the conversation in the movie *I am Sam*, I found seven out of eight expressions of gratitude that used by the main character of the movie in his daily conversation. I rank it based on the biggest percentage number to the smallest percentage number. The most dominant strategy is positive feeling (35%) and the least strategy used is repayment (2%). Followed by attention getter (23%), the third is thanking (13%), the fourth is apology (12%), the fifth strategy is other (9%), recognition of imposition (6%), and the last strategy is appreciation (0%).

Furthermore, I can conclude that although Sam has several disability such as his mental age of 7 years old, but that does not make Sam Dawson any less. Sam proves that he also has a gratitude feeling towards the other, and know how to express it in the best possible way he can do. Through his mostly used strategy, positive feeling, Sam both explicitly and implicitly showing not only people surround him but also the movie audience that he has a positive vibe.

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